



City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

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November 19, 2024

The Honorable Interior Secretary Deb Haaland

Department of the Interior

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to express my strong support for the creation of a national monument to permanently preserve the Caja del Rio cultural landscape and wildlife area. As outlined in Resolution No. 2022-34, which was unanimously adopted by the Governing Body of the City of Santa Fe, the Caja del Rio is a region of profound cultural, historical, archeological, and ecological significance.

The Caja del Rio, located on 106,883 acres of Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service public lands in north-central New Mexico, is one of the United States' most iconic landscapes. It is a landscape of dramatic topography, with geological processes stemming from the Rio Grande rift, and it contains two dynamic watersheds—the Santa Fe River Canyon and the Rio Grande corridor from Buckman to Cochiti Lake. These watersheds have critical cultural, hydrological, ecological, agricultural, and economic significance.

The Caja del Rio is home to a remarkable array of wildlife, including cactus forests, burrowing owls, bald eagles, herds of deer and elk, black bears, and cougars. It has been a critical habitat for wildlife for millennia and continues to serve as a migratory corridor, breeding grounds, and an area of relocation during wildfires and changing climates. The preservation of this landscape is essential for maintaining wildlife connectivity throughout the Upper Rio Grande.

The Governing Body of the City of Santa Fe supports the permanent protection, long-term preservation, and responsible stewardship of the Caja del Rio landscape through an appropriate federal land use designation. We believe that the Caja del Rio should become an important experiential learning "classroom" for the area's surrounding youth and a place to teach children the cultural, historical, ecological, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects of this remarkable landscape.

In conclusion, I strongly urge President Biden, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and New Mexico's Congressional delegation to support the creation of a national monument to protect and preserve the Caja del Rio. This designation will ensure that this precious natural and cultural landscape is safeguarded for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alan Webber

Mayor

CC Honorable Senator Martin Heinrich
Honorable Senator Ben Ray Lujan
Honorable Representative Theresa Leger Fernandez
Honorable Representative Gabe Vasquez
Honorable Melanie Stansbury